

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF ST. LOUIS

MONTHLY REPORT ON

GENERAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS IN FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT No. 8

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ACCOUNTS relative to the condition of business in this district during the past thirty days vary considerably in the several lines investigated. While as a whole general business has continued the steady improvement noted during the three months immediately preceding, the betterment is not universal, several important lines reporting a decided slowing down during March and early April. Unfavorable weather has held back seasonal activity in the distribution of merchandise, and merchants and manufacturers complain of the unwillingness of their customers to purchase in quantity, or more than they can dispose of from week to week and month to month. The question of prices continues to play an important part, and while confidence in values now is greater than at any time since the downward reaction set in, there is still enough doubt and uncertainty left to hamper the free movement of goods into consumption.

Notable improvement has taken place in the demand for and movement of goods based on iron and steel. Activities at mills and foundries have gained impetus, and during the past six weeks sales of pig iron, scrap and other raw materials used by these industries were larger than in any like period in more than eighteen months. Among the other lines which have either held their own or reported improvement may be mentioned boots and shoes, woodenware, clothing, groceries, candy, automobiles and hardware. Dullness is reported in wholesale drygoods, drugs, millinery, flour and bakery products, electrical supplies and fire clay products. Drygoods interests show decreases in volume of business, both as compared with the preceding month and the corresponding period a year ago. A considerable volume of returned goods and some cancellations of orders are reported in this line.

Specifically results of the coal miners' strike, which commenced April 1, have not been felt save in the mining communities. Industrial and other consumers of coal and coke throughout the district had made ample provision against the expected interruption of supplies, and reserves on hand are sufficient to last from six weeks to two months, and in some instances longer. No factories have been obliged to close down because of lack of coal, and the only additions to the unemployed in the district have been at the mines and in agencies of fuel distribution. Morally, however, effects of the strike, are noticeable in a tendency to emphasize the conservatism which has prevailed in business during recent months and to cause further postponement in certain building and purchasing programs.

Of greater importance than the coal strike in its influence on business during the past few weeks has been the high water. Flood conditions along the Mississippi River and its tributaries, great and small, have been the worst in many years. Broad areas of farm land have been inundated, and great damage has been wrought in towns and cities located in the lowlands. Impassable roads and the high water have seriously interfered with railroad traffic and have prevented farmers from reaching town, besides delaying all kinds of spring farm operations. Reports from all sections of the district indicate that seeding of spring crops has made little progress, and irreparable damage has been done to winter wheat in the fertile bottom lands along the flooded streams.

The movement of cereals and other farm products to market during March showed a heavy slump as compared with February and March, 1921. Receipts of corn at St. Louis, for example, were 4,113,000 bushels in February, and only 2,210,000 bushels in March. The decreased movement was due in part to lower prices, but impassable roads accounted for the main portion of the decrease. Prices of leading farm products in the St. Louis market, which declined sharply during the latter part of March, recovered much of the loss in early April. The July and September wheat options moved to new high prices on the crop, and there was an appreciable recovery in cash wheat. Corn and oats moved upward, and the month was marked by satisfactory prices for cattle, hogs and sheep.

Replies to questionnaires addressed to leading manufacturers and merchants of the district indicate in the main optimism relative to the business outlook. A rather universal comment is that conditions are more stable, both in respect to stocks and prices, and the public is in need of commodities of all sorts. Stocks of merchandise in retailers hands continue abnormally low in many sections. Orders for goods, while smaller than usual in size, are being placed in large numbers, and bulk satisfactorily in the aggregate. Manufacturers are increasing their purchases of raw material, and for the first time in a great while, are accumulating finished goods in anticipation of a demand later on. Plentiful and easier money has a tendency to broaden manufacturing programs and buying of merchandise for forward delivery.

The first week of the coal strike, while marked by a radical reduction in output, was accompanied by no change in prices for either coal or coke in this district. In the second week of April there was a slight strengthening in bituminous coal, and an ad-

vance in metallurgical coke, particularly the product of Eastern ovens. The demand for fuel generally, however, has thus far failed to show any abnormal stimulation. The reason for this is that the principal consumers had made preparation against the strike, and steam and domestic requirements are well protected for at least sixty days. Many mines in the district have loaded cars on track which have not yet been moved. Louisville, Memphis and other Southern cities report the demand for coal quiet. It is significant, however, that the usual seasonal decline in the price of coal at retail has not taken place. By-product coke makers in the district are holding large reserves of both metallurgical coke and domestic sizes.

Reports relative to collections show, on the whole, rather satisfactory conditions. April is an important month in this regard with boot and shoe and wholesale drygoods establishments in this district, and both these interests report results equal to, or better than at the same period a year ago. Generally, payments on current business are excellent, but as has been the case for a year or more, old accounts are being paid less promptly, though old indebtedness has been largely reduced since January 1. Backwardness is reported in meeting bills in the flooded areas, but this is believed to be a temporary condition. Answers to 305 questionnaires addressed to representative interests in various lines throughout the Eighth Federal Reserve District asking for data relative to collections show the following results: 3.2 per cent excellent, 19.4 per cent good, 61.3 per cent fair and 16.1 per cent poor.

Throughout March business of railroads operating in this district developed further improvement. Car loadings during the two last weeks of that month were the heaviest since October, 1921, and while the increase represented in large part shipments of coal in anticipation of the strike, other classes of freight made an excellent showing. The decrease in the movement of cereals was offset

to some extent by heavier shipments of early fruits and vegetables to market, and the movement of live stock and miscellaneous merchandise held up well. Since April 1 there has been a perceptible slowing down, due to the coal strike and interference with traffic by high water. The St. Louis Terminal Railway Association which includes in its membership 26 roads operating through this gateway, interchanged 172,895 loads, which compares with 150,704 loads in February, 151,093 loads in January and 141,226 loads in December. For the first 9 days of April, 40,346 loads were interchanged, against 52,199 loads for the first 9 days of March and 49,199 loads for the corresponding period in February. Passenger traffic continues backward, the volume in March being about 25 per cent less than for the same month in 1921. All roads in this region are well covered on their immediate fuel requirements.

Improvement in the automotive industry, noted in the preceding issue of this report, continued through March and the early weeks of April. Reports of 235 dealers scattered throughout the district show more new vehicles sold than in any like period since the recession set in, in 1920. There has been a satisfactory reduction in the number of used cars on the market, especially in St. Louis, Louisville and Memphis. Producers of passenger cars in the district are operating at or near capacity. Sales of trucks and delivery wagons are from 36 to 70 per cent larger than for the corresponding period a year ago. A feature of the business has been the marked improvement of sales by country dealers, despite the excessive rains and flood conditions over a large part of the territory. An over supply of tires in dealers' hands is having a depressing effect on that department of the industry. Generally improvement in the accessory business has kept pace with the improvement in automobiles.

The per capita circulation of the United States on April 1, 1922 was \$49.81, against \$50.27 on March 1 and \$57.51 on April 1, 1921.

Commercial failures in the 12 Federal Reserve Districts during the months of March and February, with comparative figures for March, 1921, as compiled by Dun's were as follows:

District	NUMBER			LIABILITIES		
	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921
Boston, First.....	217	206	88	\$ 8,066,696	\$ 6,235,271	\$ 8,259,999
New York, Second.....	478	.....	248	14,656,044	24,202,858	30,836,832
Philadelphia, Third.....	96	93	63	6,848,734	2,436,402	1,082,419
Cleveland, Fourth.....	202	235	88	4,159,463	4,627,038	2,767,384
Richmond, Fifth.....	215	213	123	3,787,550	4,761,774	2,918,460
Atlanta, Sixth.....	221	270	152	5,559,986	5,331,050	2,397,390
Chicago, Seventh.....	336	288	138	13,189,340	7,876,931	3,438,805
St. Louis, Eighth.....	173	167	108	2,529,541	4,653,231	5,273,193
Minneapolis, Ninth.....	103	97	27	3,764,602	2,300,814	703,571
Kansas City, Tenth.....	100	99	66	1,720,146	2,006,480	4,189,798
Dallas, Eleventh.....	107	207	98	2,121,725	5,889,142	2,702,593
San Francisco, Twelfth.....	215	156	137	5,204,365	2,287,431	2,838,475
Total.....	2,463	2,331	1,336	\$71,608,192	\$72,608,393	\$67,408,909

MANUFACTURING AND WHOLESALE

Boots and Shoes — As was the case in February, reports of the 11 reporting interests show wide variation in sales during March. In dollar value results were from 3 per cent less to 40 per cent larger than for the same month in 1921, with the average about 16 per cent larger, while the range

in volume was from steady to 45 per cent larger. Orders arriving since April 1 are satisfactory, and include a larger portion for forward delivery. An enormous business in Easter goods and specialties was reported, though the demand still centers largely in low priced shoes. During the period under

review factory operation in the district was from 80 to 100 per cent of capacity. Prices for fall lines of leading manufacturers represent a decline of from 4 to 5 per cent under levels prevailing up to April 1. Collections are very good. One leading interest reported on April 10 that his collections were 40 per cent larger than for the same date last year, while others showed improvement to the extent of from 14½ to 30 per cent. An important St. Louis manufacturer who has compiled an index in which prices in 1913 and 1914 represent par, states that in 1920 his maximum reached 276, while on April 1 this year the index figure had fallen to 137.

Clothing — According to the 23 reporting interests, sales in March were from 6 to 32 per cent larger than during the same month in 1921, and 2 to 20 per cent larger than in February this year. With but two exceptions the reporting interests indicate steady improvement in business, which they attribute largely to exhausted stocks in retailers' hands and inability of the public to further postpone buying. Recent reductions in prices have met good response. Fall lines are now being put out, and unusual efforts will be made to sell these goods. Prices of fall clothing are opening about 5 per cent under those of 1921. Buying continues chiefly on a necessity basis. Manufacturers continue to complain of production costs, and many buyers are holding off pending further labor adjustments. It is estimated that it now costs from two to two and a half times as much to manufacture a suit of men's clothing, retailing at from \$18 to \$35 as in 1914. Six wholesalers of men's hats report gains of from 4 to 18 per cent over March, 1921, and from 5 to 32 per cent over February this year. With but three exceptions, millinery interests report decreases in sales in March under those of a year ago.

Iron and Steel Products — Virtually all lines in this classification continue to reflect marked improvement. Buying of ferrous materials by the railroads has been in larger volume, and the building industry is absorbing increased tonnages. There was a further sharp gain in the melt of pig iron in the district during the period under review, estimated at about 17½ per cent as compared with the preceding month. Steel rolling mills, foundries and machine shops report the placement of more new business than has been the case in more than eighteen months.. Specialty makers have participated in the general improvement. Stove manufacturers, 7 interests reporting, showed sales in March from 15 to 102 per cent larger than in March, 1921, and from 2 to 93 per cent larger than in February. Five farm implement manufacturers and distributors report March sales from 17 to 78 per cent larger than a year ago, and from steady to 34½ per cent larger than in February. Railway supply interests, 4 reporting, show gains of 12 to 22 per cent increase over March a year ago, and 13 to 33 per cent over February. Pig iron prices have advanced, Southern No. 2 foundry being quoted at \$16 to \$16.50, and the Northern product of the same grade from \$20 to \$20.50 per ton. The demand for ferro-alloys, silvery iron and other specialties is better than in many months. All grades of iron and steel scrap have advanced to new high levels on the present upward movement.

Hardware — Sales of the 12 reporting interests in March were from 10 per cent less to 20 per cent larger than for the same month in 1921 and 10 to 30 per cent larger than in February this year. The universal comment is that orders, while numerous, are in smaller volume than heretofore, and buying is largely for immediate requirements. There is an excellent movement of wire goods, which have advanced slightly in price, and other seasonal materials. Builders' hardware continues active, but the reverse is the case relative to builders tools. Golf, baseball, and other seasonal sporting goods are being well taken, and sales of fishing tackle are unusually heavy. There is some complaint relative to collections, especially in the South and in the flood areas.

Flour — Production of 11 leading mills in the district during March was 329,428 barrels, against 250,472 barrels in February and 333,966 barrels in January. Business throughout March was described as dull, with a hand-to-mouth domestic trade, and little interest displayed by exporters. The first weeks of April developed a slight improvement in the demand, which, according to millers, reflected depleted stocks and a slightly better inquiry from Latin-American countries. Prices continue steady strong, mainly in sympathy with the scarcity of and very strong position of cash wheat. Choice milling grain is increasingly difficult to secure and stocks in elevators have been heavily drawn upon. Mill operation in the district during the period under review was at about half of capacity.

Groceries — Sales of the 13 reporting interests showed little variation in March as contrasted with February, but increased from 4 to 16 per cent over those of the corresponding period a year ago. All interests report business in a more satisfactory condition, particularly in point of profits. Stabilization of prices has progressed to the point where greater confidence is felt, and retailers are more disposed to purchase into the future. The movement of canned goods during the past six weeks has been active, and wholesalers stocks are materially reduced. Sales of candy for the Easter trade were more than double those of a year ago. Collections are spotted, but are generally good on current business.

Drugs and Chemicals — March sales of the 7 reporting interests were from 8 per cent less to 10 per cent greater than for the same month in 1921 and from 5 per cent less to 20 per cent larger than in February. There is a slightly better demand for chemicals used in manufacturing, and all the reporting interests comment on their heavier sales for forward delivery. More stock orders are materializing than in more than a year.

Furniture — Sales of the 11 reporting interests were 1 to 12 per cent better than in February, and from 36 to 52 per cent larger than during the same period a year ago. The volume of orders for immediate shipment is fairly large, but very little in the way of future buying has developed. The comment is made that intensive efforts are necessary to place goods. Furniture interests in St. Louis featured the week of April 8 as "Better Furniture Week" and in Evansville a similar effort was undertaken

under the title of "Trade Period." Results in both instances were reported as only fair, and considerably under expectations. Factory operations in the district are at from 60 to 75 per cent of capacity. No change in prices worthy of comment has taken place during the past month or six weeks.

Lumber—The spring demand for lumber has developed strongly since the early part of March. For that month complete, lumber receipts at St. Louis were 38½ per cent and the shipments 19 per cent larger than for the same period in 1921. March receipts showed a gain over those of March, 1920, of 13 per cent, and the shipments a loss of less than 3 per cent. The general volume of the movement was well maintained during early April. In the major building woods, the buying is largely of common grades for framing and exterior work, such as dimension and boards, along with timbers where construction is for business uses. Building,

Industrial Power Consumption—Public utility companies in the four leading cities of the district report consumption of electrical power by industrial consumers during March 11.4 per cent greater than in February, and .9 per cent better than during March, 1921. The comparative figures follow:

	Representative Customers	March, 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1922 comp. to Feb. 1922	March, 1921	Mar. 1922 comp. to Mar. 1921
St. Louis.....	63	5,647,665 k. w. h.	5,054,754 k. w. h.	+11.7	6,570,565 k. w. h.	-14.1
Memphis	31	817,980 "	744,380 "	+ 9.1	608,620 "	+34.4
Little Rock.....	11	628,030 "	520,003 "	+20.7	547,710 "	+14.6
Louisville	81	2,204,198 "	2,022,822 "	+ 8.9	1,660,468 "	+32.7
Total....	186	9,297,873 "	8,341,959 "	+11.4	9,387,363 "	+ .9

RETAIL

The lateness of Easter as compared with other years, continuous heavy rains, unseasonably cool weather, and the coal strike conspired to slow down retail business during March and early April. Analysis of sales statistics in the several lines investigated develop only minor changes as compared with February totals, but in most instances the volume fell behind that of March, 1921. Reports received since April, indicate a fair revival in activity, especially in lines which most directly reflect Easter buying. Sales of jewelers in March averaged close to 10 per cent under the same month last year and were steady with February. The showing was helped by some sales of expensive articles effected by several of the more important interests. Distribution of clothing was handicapped by the unseasonable weather, the demand for garments for spring wear being unusually backward. Clothing merchants say that the loss occasioned by these conditions can not be made up, as the public will change from winter to summer apparel, and spring stocks will have to be carried over or sold at a sacrifice. This is true particularly of felt hats, women's suits and medium-weight

underwear. Athletic goods are being stimulated by the arrival of the season for outdoor sports. A feature of this business is the unprecedented demand for baseball supplies. Factories making these specialties have been operating at capacity, and are unable to fill their orders. Sales of tennis and golf goods are not up to those of recent seasons. Furniture dealers report a fair demand for goods for the household, especially cheap bedroom and dining room sets. Office furniture and supplies continue quiet. With the exception of garden tools, wire goods and builders hardware, quietness is the rule in the hardware line. Printers and stationers report insufficient business to keep their full forces employed, and the keen competition in recent weeks has resulted in price cutting which is unfavorably reflected in profits. Candy shops report heavy increases in their Easter business over last year, some showing gains as high as 150 per cent. Receipts of theaters and other places of amusement show a heavy decrease under the corresponding period a year ago. Chain store sales in the district continue on a large scale, with gains over the preceding month and the corresponding period a year ago.

Department Stores—The condition of retail trade during March, 1922, in the leading cities of this district is reflected in the following statement, compiled from reports of 21 representative department stores:

(Percentages)	St. Louis	Louis- ville	Memphis	Little Rock	Evans- ville	Quincy	8th Dis- trict
Net Sales:							
Mar. 1922, compared with Mar. 1921.....	-18.3	-15.2	-21.3	-33.6	-21.5	-21.4	-19.8
Period Jan. 1 to Mar. 31, 1922 compared with same period in 1921.....	-15.6	-11.1	-16.8	-26.1	-10.0	-17.0	-16.1
Stocks at end of March, 1922:							
Compared with same month in 1921.....	- .9	- 3.6	+ 7.6	+20.9	-12.9	+ 4.3	+ 2.0
Compared with stocks at end of Feb. 1922.....	+10.2	- 4.3	+ 6.6	+ 7.5	+ 6.7	+10.0	+ 8.5
Average stocks on hand at end of each month since Jan. 1, 1922, to average monthly sales during same period.....	361.7	591.6	609.6	524.3	1021.7	561.8	452.4
Outstanding orders for March, 1922, compared with previous year's purchases.....	5.7	2.7	7.0	5.4	2.5	4.8	5.5

AGRICULTURE

Reports from virtually all sections of the district tell of serious delays to spring farm operations due to wet weather. Throughout March there were frequent rains, which during the early days of April gained in intensity, making roads impassable and putting fields in such condition that it was impossible to cultivate them. Except in the case of oats, however, it is not likely that any of the crops will be reduced on this account, as there remains ample time for seeding corn, legumes and vegetables. Furthermore, years of heavy rainfall in this region are almost invariably coeval with heavy agricultural production. Crop failures are generally caused by insufficient moisture, and are rarely the result of excessive precipitation.

Except where irreparable damage has been done to winter wheat by floods, this crop is in excellent condition. Marked improvement has taken place since the extreme cold weather, and the plant has a fine stand and good root growth, with color perfect. Thousands of acres in the bottom lands along the flooded streams, however, will be a total loss.

Relatively little corn has been planted, and reports relative to prospective acreages vary considerably. In Kentucky the outlook is for smaller plantings, while in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee slight increases are indicated. In Missouri, Illinois and other upper states of the district the area seeded will be about the same as last season.

Pastures are in prime condition, and with but few exceptions, the condition of live stock is splendid. Planting of potatoes is backward, and the same is true of vegetables and garden truck generally. Prospects for fruit in this district are the best in a number of years. The strawberry crop in Arkansas gives every indication of being a record one. Apple and peach orchards have been subject to more care-

ful cultivation than in former years. The outlook for deciduous fruits is everywhere the best.

Tobacco, both in the burley and dark districts, has practically all been delivered by the farmers. The Burley Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Marketing Association has not announced the prices it proposes naming on its redried burley. Its receipts are very light and it is generally supposed it has received about all the tobacco it will get in this season. In the dark fired district of Kentucky very little tobacco is being bought from the farmers direct as the crop has been picked over closely and the unsold portion is either held at prices above buyers' views or the quality is of such nature as to be unattractive. Preparations are being made in all districts for a full sized crop of burley and dark tobacco.

Cotton planting, which has been impeded by excessive moisture, is progressing slowly. Reports from Arkansas indicate acreage 16 per cent larger than last year. In that State plowing is 54 per cent completed and 13 per cent of the crop planted. Increased fertilizer sales are reported in a few localities. Moisture conditions permitting, Missouri will have its usual cotton acreage.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, in its report as of April 1, 1922, gives the condition of winter wheat in States of the Eighth Federal Reserve District as follows:

	Condition				Price April 1	
	April 1		10 yr.	Dec. 1	1922	1921
	1922	1921	av.	1921		
Arkansas	86	91	87	77	122	141
Illinois	93	96	81	93	120	140
Indiana	90	89	80	92	125	142
Kentucky	94	95	85	95	135	166
Mississippi	88	90	86	90	175	203
Missouri	88	93	84	87	117	141
Tennessee	95	94	84	93	135	181

Range of prices on typical products in the St. Louis market between March 15 and April 15, with closing quotations on each of these dates, and on April 15, 1921:

		Close Mar. 15,				Close April 15,		
		1922	High	Low		1922	1921	
May wheat.....	Per bu.	\$1.28½	\$1.39½	\$1.25¼		\$1.39½	\$1.21	
July wheat.....	"	1.10½	1.27½	1.09¾		1.27½	1.05	
Sept. wheat.....	"	1.05¾	1.18¼	1.07¾		1.18¼	-----	
May corn.....	"	.58	.61	.55¾		.59½	.54	
July corn.....	"	.61¼	.63¾	.59¼		.63½	.58	
Sept. corn.....	"	.62½	.65½	.62½		.65½	.61	
May oats.....	"	.38¾	.39¾	.37		.38¾	.36½	
July oats.....	"	.40¾	.41¾	.39		.41¾	.36¾	
No. 2 red winter wheat..	"	1.38	1.47	1.32	1.44 @	1.47	1.29 @	1.31
No. 2 hard wheat.....	"	\$1.28 @	1.48	1.26	1.43 @	1.48		1.30
No. 2 corn.....	"	.56½	.59½	.54	.59 @	.59½		.54½
No. 2 white corn.....	"	.57	.60	.56		.58½		.56
No. 2 white oats.....	"	.37½	.40	.37	.39 @	.39½		.38
Flour: Soft patent.....	Per bbl.	6.50 @	7.50	6.00	6.00 @	7.00	6.50 @	7.00
Flour: Spring patent.....	"	7.00 @	7.30	7.00	7.00 @	7.75	7.25 @	7.50
Middling cotton.....	Per lb.	.17½	.17½	.17		.17		.11½
Hogs on hoof.....	Per cwt.	8.00 @	10.40	7.25	8.25 @	10.45	5.50 @	9.10

LABOR SITUATION

The labor situation in this district is reflected in the following table, compiled from reports received from 200 leading employers in 20 of the largest cities in the district:

	Men	Women	Wage Earners			Pay Roll
			Total	Normal	% of Normal	
March 31, 1922.....	101,470	20,215	121,694	156,011	-22.0	\$6,892,802.20
Feb. 28, 1922.....	95,846	21,540	117,386	153,775	-23.6	6,845,740.89
March 31, 1921.....	103,171	17,375	120,546	156,011	-22.7	7,631,335.52

From the above tabulation it will be noted that the number of employes of the reporting interests increased 1,148 or .9% (men decreased 1.6% while women increased 16.3%) between March 31, 1921 and

March 31, 1922. On March 31, 1921, the number was 22.7% under normal and on February 28, 1922, the total was 23.6% under normal as compared with 22% on March 31, 1922. Wages figured on a semi-monthly basis, decreased 9.6% between March 31, 1921 and March 31, 1922.

COMMODITY MOVEMENT

Receipts and shipments of important commodities at St. Louis during March, 1922 and 1921, and February, 1922, as reported by the Merchants' Exchange, were as follows:

	Receipts			Shipments		
	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921
Flour, barrels.....	412,770	366,350	374,490	592,360	451,380	423,970
Wheat, bushels.....	2,451,443	2,286,000	2,696,397	2,407,290	1,749,370	2,545,780
Corn, bushels.....	2,210,000	4,113,200	3,318,900	2,402,955	2,345,585	2,469,680
Oats, bushels.....	1,886,000	2,584,000	2,652,000	1,864,440	1,722,070	2,203,660
Lead, pigs.....	404,630	232,080	154,650	146,490	135,740	98,950
Zinc and Spelter, slabs.....	252,340	133,720	180,950	303,910	391,540	244,550
Lumber, cars.....	15,085	10,271	10,893	10,218	7,885	8,593
Meats, pounds.....	13,754,800	13,650,700	6,469,200	22,246,900	22,230,100	24,143,500
Fresh Beef, pounds.....	62,600	129,100	1,718,200	15,612,300	15,916,600	20,370,100
Lard, pounds.....	2,709,500	4,016,400	2,389,800	7,083,300	8,033,700	10,750,600
Hides, pounds.....	5,310,700	6,618,500	2,420,700	7,871,800	7,699,000	5,543,800

LIVE STOCK MOVEMENT

As reported by the St. Louis National Stock Yards, receipts and shipments of live stock in March, 1922 and 1921, and February, 1922, were as follows:

	Receipts			Shipments		
	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921	Mar. 1922	Feb. 1922	Mar. 1921
Cattle and Calves.....	72,312	66,490	63,497	41,931	36,552	33,583
Hogs	286,203	289,520	266,649	196,039	216,463	174,419
Sheep	22,335	21,308	23,423	6,574	8,436	8,087
Horses and Mules.....	9,567	7,892	8,222	10,918	9,671	11,674

BUILDING

Building permits issued in the five leading cities of the district, St. Louis, Louisville, Memphis, Little Rock and Evansville, during March showed a radical increase over the preceding month, also over the corresponding period in 1921. In addition to these statistics the rapid growth of building operations is indicated in special reports from all sections of the district. As noted in the preceding issue of this report, a feature of the present activity is the large number of small homes being erected in the country and suburbs of the larger cities. In the cities, ground has been broken for a large number of apartment houses, and considerable work is being either done or planned by municipalities in the way of schools and other public buildings. Sales of material manufacturers, notably fire clay, glass, roofing, hardware and cement, during February and March reflect increased activity in the building industry. Road building during March and early April was interrupted temporarily by continuous wet weather. Further reductions in labor costs are reported, notable among which were the voluntary reductions by the St. Louis carpenters' and sheet metal workers' unions from \$1.25 to \$1.12½ and from \$1.25 to \$1 per hour, respectively.

Comparative figures for March in leading cities of the district follow:

	New Construction				Repairs, etc.			
	Permits		Cost		Permits		Cost	
	1922	1921	1922	1921	1922	1921	1922	1921
St. Louis.....	626	526	\$1,495,940	\$ 739,865	502	553	\$303,065	\$234,540
Louisville	233	82	1,217,150	449,200	143	270	86,750	93,550
Memphis	393	202	1,332,600	549,060	32	61	12,840	82,380
Little Rock.....	87	83	263,540	304,924	156	184	69,032	59,351
Evansville	66	34	201,347	40,520	82	96	30,343	18,884
Mar. totals.....	1,405	927	\$4,510,577	\$2,083,569	915	1,164	\$502,030	\$488,705
Feb. totals.....	844	545	3,762,435	1,298,016	632	653	388,052	328,833
Jan. totals.....	714	424	2,273,860	1,174,416	478	504	306,034	338,168

POSTAL RECEIPTS

	Quarter ended March 31, 1922	Quarter ended Dec. 31, 1922	Quarter ended March 31, 1921
St. Louis.....	\$2,471,204.81	\$2,634,058.14	\$2,232,646.19
Memphis	360,445.17	398,109.94	351,737.44
Little Rock.....	172,713.80	175,264.13	181,555.01
Evansville	119,883.63	118,331.55	108,975.91
Total.....	\$3,024,247.41	\$3,325,763.76	\$2,874,914.55

FINANCIAL

The period under review was marked by a further easing in the credit situation in this district. Banks in the large cities are heavily supplied with funds, the amount of which was augmented by deposits resulting from large payments to wholesale drygoods, boot and shoe and other mercantile interests with which April is an important settlement month. The volume of these collections was large, leading houses reporting results to April 15 from 15 to 40 per cent better than on the corresponding date a year ago. The demand for credits, especially from commercial sources, is less active than heretofore, and the city banks are seeking investment for their surplus funds. The situation in the country shows little change, banks in the smaller towns being still well loaned up. There is still an excellent demand for financing live stock, and requirements for spring farm operations are being felt. Relatively little liquidation has taken place in the cotton areas, but the present crop will be planted at smaller expense than has been the case in recent years, and loans in the South are not expanding to the extent usual at this season. Marketing of tobacco continues on a satisfactory basis, and a considerable volume of credits based on that staple has been liquidated. Effective April 6, this bank lowered its discount rate to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on all classes of loans and maturities. There has been a slight reduction in rates asked by the commercial banks. Statistics reflecting the activities of this bank during the past thirty days show only small variation. Between February 15 and March 15 net deposits increased \$3,130,000, and Federal Reserve notes in circulation decreased \$4,050,000, while bills discounted for member banks increased \$1,690,170.59. Between the same dates total reserve carried against Federal Reserve notes and deposit

liabilities combined decreased 4.9 per cent, standing at 74.1 per cent on April 15.

Acceptances — The market for bankers' acceptances during the past few weeks has been extremely quiet and uneventful. The demand is almost nil, due chiefly to the low interest rates, the minimum quotation having fallen to $3\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. Offerings are light, and no bills to speak of have originated in this district. Acceptances purchased in the open market by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis in March amounted to \$1,173,799, against \$2,081,290 in February.

Commercial Paper — Business of commercial paper houses during the period under review was the most satisfactory in point of volume experienced in several months. Two leading houses report sales in March well in excess of combined totals of January and February. There is an excellent demand from country banks, and financial institutions were good buyers through March and the first week of April. The demand exceeds the supply, and desirable names are increasingly difficult to secure. Rates range from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent, with the minor figure of the spread the one generally prevailing at this time.

Bonds — The market for investment bonds continues active and in an unusually satisfactory position. The demand for all desirable issues, particularly municipal obligations, continues strong and prices scored a further excellent advance. Several large issues of industrial corporations recently placed in this district were well taken. The recent advance in Liberty Bonds has had a stimulating effect on the market for Government obligations. This bank's quota of the last issue of Treasury Certificates, dated April 15 and bearing $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest, was largely oversubscribed.

Interest Rates — Between March 16 and April 15 the high, low and customary interest rates prevailing in St. Louis, Louisville, Memphis and Little Rock, as reported by banks in those cities were as follows:

	St. Louis			Louisville			Memphis			Little Rock		
	H	L	C	H	L	C	H	L	C	H	L	C
Customers' Prime Commercial Paper:												
30 to 90 days.....	6	$4\frac{3}{4}$	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	8	8	6	7
4 to 6 months.....	6	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	7	8	6	7-8
Prime Commercial Paper purchased in open market:												
30 to 90 days.....	$5\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{1}{2}$	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{3}{4}$	5	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
4 to 6 months.....	$5\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$5\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{3}{4}$	5	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Loans to other banks.....	$6\frac{1}{2}$	5	6	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	7	7	6	7
Bankers' Acceptances of 60 to 90 days:												
Endorsed	4	4	4	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Unendorsed	4	4	4	5	5	5	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Loans secured by prime stock exchange collateral or other current collateral:												
Demand	7	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	6	8	7	7
3 months	7	5	6	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	6	8	7	7
3 to 6 months.....	7	5	6	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	8	6	6	8	7	7-8
Cattle Loans.....	8	6	$6\frac{1}{2}$	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	8	7	8
Commodity paper secured by warehouse receipts, etc.....	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	6	6	6	8	6	6	8	7	8
Loans secured by Liberty Bonds and Certificates.....	$6\frac{1}{2}$	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	7	6	6	8	7	7

Savings Deposits — The changes in the number of savings accounts and the amount of savings deposits, exclusive of postal savings deposits, since a month ago and a year ago, as reported by the largest member banks in the leading cities of this district, are shown in the following table:

	April 5, 1922			March 1, 1922			April 1, 1921		
	Number Banks Reporting	Number Savings Accounts	Amount Savings Deposits	Number Savings Accounts	Amount Savings Deposits	Number Savings Accounts	Amount Savings Deposits		
St. Louis.....	12	234,558	\$ 63,462,000	232,523	\$ 62,575,000	220,687	\$ 60,348,000		
Louisville	7	133,167	20,431,000	131,713	20,045,000	117,048	17,512,000		
Memphis	7	56,889	13,209,000	54,721	13,703,000	50,164	12,168,000		
Little Rock.....	5	24,092	6,183,000	24,980	6,248,000	21,399	5,550,000		
Evansville	4	21,023	8,190,000	21,003	8,133,000	19,883	8,038,000		
Total.....	35	469,729	\$111,675,000	464,940	\$110,704,000	430,181	\$103,616,000		

Condition of Banks—The condition of banks in this district and changes since a month ago and last year, are reflected in the following comparative statement, showing the principal resources and liabilities of member banks in St. Louis, Louisville, Memphis, Little Rock and Evansville:

	April 12, 1922	March 15, 1922	April 15, 1921
Number banks reporting.....	37	37	37
Loans and Discounts (excluding rediscounts):			
Secured by U. S. Govt. obligations.....	\$ 12,754,000	\$ 14,417,000	\$ 18,740,000
Secured by stocks and bonds other than U. S. Bonds..	124,986,000	129,929,000	121,516,000
All other loans and discounts.....	280,913,000	283,637,000	292,020,00
Total loans and discounts.....	\$418,653,000	\$427,983,000	\$432,276,000
Investments:			
U. S. Bonds.....	25,134,000	24,667,000	28,221,000
U. S. Victory Notes.....	2,724,000	4,469,000	2,189,000
U. S. Treasury Notes.....	5,692,000	6,075,000	.....
U. S. Certificates of Indebtedness.....	4,395,000	6,486,000	1,671,000
Other bonds, stocks and securities.....	74,322,000	70,881,000	66,775,000
Total Investments.....	\$112,267,000	\$112,578,000	\$ 98,856,000
Reserve balance with Federal Reserve Bank.....	41,476,000	43,315,000	40,838,000
Cash in vault.....	6,957,000	13,440,000	8,428,000
Net demand deposits on which reserve is computed.....	319,964,000	314,449,000	315,677,000
Time deposits.....	159,173,000	157,863,000	143,450,000
Government deposits.....	4,461,000	7,282,000	8,080,000
Bills discounted with Federal Reserve Bank.....	6,587,000	9,115,000	35,364,000
Bills payable with Federal Reserve Bank.....	1,618,000	1,240,000	16,079,000

Debits to Individual Accounts—The following table gives the total debits charged by banks to checking accounts, savings accounts and trust accounts of individuals, firms, corporations and U. S. Government and also certificates of deposit paid, in the leading cities of this district during the past month and corresponding period a year ago. Charges to the accounts of banks and bankers are not included. These figures are considered the most reliable index available for indicating actual spending by the public during the periods which they cover:

Debits for four weeks ending.....	April 19, 1922	Mar. 15, 1922	April 1922 comp. to Mar. 1922	April 20, 1921	April 1922 comp. to April 1921
St. Louis.....	\$508,358,000	\$489,975,000	+ 3.8	\$520,052,000	- 2.2
Louisville	122,601,000	123,274,000	- .5	116,674,000	+ 5.1
Memphis	90,037,000	90,721,000	- .8	75,023,000	+20.0
Little Rock.....	35,099,000	36,611,000	- 4.1	37,671,000	- 6.8
East St. Louis and Natl. Stock Yards	33,715,000	32,434,000	+ 3.9	32,897,000	+ 2.2
Evansville	22,820,000	25,732,000	-11.3	19,337,000	+18.0
Springfield	11,658,000	11,231,000	+ 3.8	11,652,000	+ .1
Quincy	9,038,000	8,429,000	+ 7.2	10,910,000	-17.2
Owensboro	4,853,000	6,091,000	-20.3	.....	.....
Greenville	3,532,000	3,633,000	- 2.8	.....	.....
Helena	3,360,000	3,328,000	+ 1.0	.....	.....

FEDERAL RESERVE OPERATIONS

In March the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis discounted \$41,018,799 of paper for 287 member banks, which is a decrease of \$13,215,310 under the amount discounted in February and a decrease of 11 in the number of banks accommodated. Acceptances purchased in March amounted to \$1,173,799, a decrease of \$908,131 under the preceding month. On April 6 the discount rate of this bank was reduced from 5 to 4½ per cent

Changes in the assets and liabilities of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis since a month ago and last year are shown in the following comparative statement (in thousands of dollars):

Comparative statement of resources and liabilities 1921-1922:

RESOURCES:				LIABILITIES:			
	April 19, 1922	Mar. 22, 1922	April 22, 1921		April 19, 1922	Mar. 22, 1922	April 22, 1921
Gold Reserves.....	\$ 93,447	\$ 97,202	\$ 90,414	Capital paid in.....	\$ 4,633	\$ 4,623	\$ 4,443
Legal tender notes, silver etc.....	18,433	16,463	11,158	Surplus	9,388	9,388	8,346
Total Cash Reserves.....	\$111,882	\$113,665	\$101,572	Reserve for U. S. Govt. franchise tax.....	92	76	.....
Discounts secured by U. S. Govt. obligations.....	7,300	9,824	34,584	Deposits	73,138	69,505	65,879
Discounts otherwise secured or unsecured..	18,136	21,107	45,903	F. R. notes in circulation	76,963	80,962	112,183
Bills bought in open market.....	820	1,248	784	F. R. Bank notes in circulation	3,365	3,381	7,055
U. S. Govt. securities.....	24,940	20,014	14,849	Deferred availability items	31,115	28,862	29,398
Total earning assets.....	\$ 51,196	\$ 52,193	\$ 96,120	Other liabilities.....	666	644	1,980
Uncollected items.....	32,873	28,452	29,855	Total liabilities.....	\$199,360	\$197,441	\$229,284
Other resources.....	3,409	3,131	1,737	Combined reserve ratio..	74.5%	75.5%	57.0%
Total Resources.....	\$199,360	\$197,441	\$229,284				

(Compiled April 20, 1922)